

“GREEN SHEET”

Meeting dates:	December 7-8, 2007 Meeting (Policy Briefing)	#14
Agenda item:	Statewide Steelhead Management Plan – Policy Briefing	
Staff Contact:	Heather Bartlett, Salmon and Steelhead Division Manager (Fish Program)	
Presenter(s):	Heather Bartlett, Salmon and Steelhead Division Manager (Fish Program) & Jim Buck, Statewide Steelhead EIS Manager (Fish Program)	

Background:

In 2004, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (the Department) initiated a multi-step process to improve the management and status of steelhead in Washington. The first step in this process was to lay the scientific foundation for the subsequent development of improved management plans. Drawing on decades of research and new analyses, a comprehensive review of steelhead stocks and their status in Washington was published in a DRAFT report “*Oncorhynchus mykiss: Assessment of Washington State’s Anadromous Populations and Programs*” (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/papers/steelhead/index.htm>). Each chapter in the Science Paper concluded with numerous findings and recommendations to guide future management.

Building on the science foundation, this second step, development of a statewide steelhead management plan has been initiated through the release of a DRAFT Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that provides a framework of policies, strategies, and actions for application throughout the state in steelhead management. Recognizing that substantial variation exists in the status of stocks, habitat conditions, and that tribal, local, and federal authorities vary across the state the objective for the DRAFT Plan is to provide the Department with the necessary guidance to develop the third and final step; regionally based steelhead resource management plans. For many of these regions, recovery plans have been developed and will compliment the statewide steelhead plan to serve as primary guidance for detailed strategies and actions identified within the regional steelhead resource management plans.

The DEIS was released to the public for 30 days of comment on August 1, 2007. Public meetings are scheduled for Sequim (8/13), Olympia (8/14), Vancouver (8/15), Mill Creek (8/16), Wenatchee (8/20), Moses Lake (8/21) and Richland (8/22). On August 16th the comment period was extended for 11 days and closed on September 11th.

Seventy-seven people submitted approximately 260 written comments about the Statewide Steelhead Management Plan and the DEIS. These comments provided important feedback to that could be incorporated into the Final Environmental Impact Statement. The comments suggested approximately 29 modifications or additions that improved the plan which are also included in the FEIS.

The FEIS recommends preferred alternatives that collectively represent the Statewide Steelhead Management Plan. The preferred alternative provides a framework of policies, strategies, and actions for application throughout the state for steelhead management. Recognizing that substantial variation exists in the status of stocks, habitat conditions, and that tribal, local, and federal authorities vary across the state the objective for the Statewide Steelhead Management Plan is to provide the department with the necessary guidance to develop regional management plans for each of the 7 steelhead distinct population segments. ESA recovery plans have been developed for many of these regions and will serve as primary guidance for detailed strategies and actions identified within the regional management plans. Adoption of the plan by the Commission will provide the department with policy direction to implement the plan.

Policy issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:

Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Statewide Steelhead Management Plan

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

Public involvement began in July 2006 with the formation of an ad hoc committee from the Steelhead and Cutthroat Policy Advisors (SCPAG). This ad hoc committee expanded to include other interested parties such as representatives of Wild Salmon Conservancy, the Hatchery Scientific Review Group, and Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. The ad hoc committee met monthly to advise the department as staff developed the DRAFT Statewide Steelhead Management Plan (represents the preferred alternative in the DEIS). Members of the ad hoc committee shaped the components and chapters the DEIS through their recommendations at public meetings and in writing to address natural production, artificial production, habitat, fishery management, adaptive management, enforcement and outreach and education.

The DEIS received broad citizen review and input. Though the preferred alternative identified within the DEIS did not change in the FEIS, a number of public comments received during the public comment period were incorporated into the FEIS to strength the language that supported increased conservation and clarify the role of the SSMP in relation to long term management activities.

Action requested:

Briefing only. Public comment will be taken at the January 10-12, 2008 meeting with request for formal adoption of the Statewide Steelhead Management Plan at the February 1-2, 2008 meeting.

Draft motion language:

N/A

Justification for Commission action:

N/A
